

Statement on the Sixth Anniversary of the Terrorist Attack on the USS *Cole*

October 12, 2006

Six years ago, on October 12, 2000, Al Qaida attacked the USS *Cole*, a U.S. Navy warship refueling in Aden harbor in Yemen. This terrorist attack killed 17 sailors and injured many others, leaving the victims' loved ones and our Nation to mourn our collective loss.

On the sixth anniversary of this attack, we pause to remember those brave service men and women whose lives were cut short by this act of terrorism and to give thanks to the brave crew whose heroic actions saved their ship and fellow shipmates.

With the men we believe to be the key architects of that attack now in custody, this anniversary should serve to renew

America's dedication to bring terrorists to justice and our gratitude to those men and women of the U.S. Government serving abroad who take great risks in protecting America.

Six years ago, our Nation was tested by terrorism. Terrorists continue to be an active threat to our Nation, but we are responding resolutely and forcefully. On this solemn anniversary, we rededicate ourselves to the fight against the enemies of humanity, offer our prayers and condolences to the families of the *Cole* victims, and offer thanks to the men and women of our Navy who protect our country and promote peace and freedom around the world.

Statement on Signing the Rio Grande Natural Area Act

October 12, 2006

Today, I have signed into law S. 56, the "Rio Grande Natural Area Act." The Act establishes the Rio Grande Natural Area in Colorado to help protect natural resources on Federal and non-Federal lands.

The Act establishes a commission to perform specified functions relating to the Natural Area. The Commission consists of nine individuals appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, of whom one must represent the Colorado State Director of the Bureau of Land Management, one must be a specified Federal employee, three must be appointed on the recommendation of the Governor of Colorado to represent various Colorado governmental entities, and four must be knowledgeable, experienced local citizens to represent the general public. Thus, the Act limits the qualifications of the pool of persons from whom the Secretary may select appointees to the Com-

mission in a manner that rules out a large portion of those persons best qualified by experience and knowledge to fill the positions, which the Appointments Clause of the Constitution does not permit if the appointees exercise significant governmental authority. To faithfully execute the Act to the maximum extent consistent with the Appointments Clause, the executive branch shall construe the provisions of the Act specifying functions for the Commission as specifying functions that are advisory only.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
October 12, 2006.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 13. S. 56, approved October 12, was assigned Public Law No. 109-337.